

COMMUNITY POLICING IN BORDER COMMUNITIES

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Abstract. *Community orientated policing is widely held as the relatively new and interesting philosophy for Latvian policing. For the fifteen years the community policing movement has been gaining momentum acquiring the support of politicians, reformers, and the society. Unfortunately there are problems that continually plague the philosophy of community policing. Some of the largest obstacles that police organizations face with the community policing program are the initial implementation and understanding of community policing, the ability to change and adapt to the new format of policing, and the acceptance.*

As part reform programs, State police of Latvia seek to introduce community policing. There is no clear or consistent definition of what constitutes a community policing programme. However, most community policing initiatives aim to improve relations between the police and residents, engage community members or civic organizations in evaluation of police services, and expand information sharing. Community policing control activities are not always linked to police reform initiatives; sometimes the two activities occur simultaneously in isolation on each other. There have been more increasing attempts to link or find synergies between control initiatives and realised programs, especially (community-based) weapons collection programs and disarmament and demobilization projects. Policing reform has been a rather neglected area of security sector reform that has been addressed on an ad hoc basis. Some analysts see the need to reduce the number of firearms in circulation as a way to improve public security, and thus training in the management of safeguarding police stockpiles, keeping accurate inventories of weapons and appropriate weapons handling need to be reinforced.

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Key words: *community policing, border communities, rights, society, police functions, safety.*

Introduction

Community policing includes many aspects. It is important to attain high quality of work and provide opportunities for every institution to contribute in fighting against many crimes in border area and border communities and more important to better employ the provided measures for prevention. This will contribute towards the increase of the efficiency to combat crime, decreasing crime and corruption, increasing legal certainty and the public's confidence in the administration of justice and, consequently, improving the conditions for attracting foreign investments. This will increase the quality of police work and duties so as the police

would be in a position to perform through appropriate practice of the police functions: preventive, reactive and repressive, which should only be used in preventive purposes better maintenance of public peace and order and re-establishment of violated public peace and order will also have cross border impact especially during the international sport and other public events with high risk.

The aim of the article is to reflect problems of reducing the level of insecurity and improving safety in a community as one of the primary objectives of community policing.

The tasks:

- 1) to analyse problems of cross-border crime situation;
- 2) to reflect security measures;
- 3) to research cooperation between police and community.

However, citizens will only be willing to hand over illicit firearms in their possession if they perceive an improvement in the public safety and security and if they have a certain degree of trust in the police and other law enforcement agencies. Community policing is regarded by many donors as a gateway to help build confidence and improve the relationship between local law enforcement officials and the community.

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Characterization of border area community and community policing problems

While some view the success of the European Union politics as an example of the potential positive impact of private citizens at the border, others remain concerned that such activities verge on vigilantism. Concerns also remain that these volunteers are assuming significant safety and liability risks. However, it is not unheard of for private citizens to assist in vital government functions. In border communities, citizen's arrest laws exist, allowing an ordinary person to make an arrest if he or she has

personally witnessed a felony. While citizen's arrest laws vary from state to state, what is important is their significance: European laws recognize that ordinary citizens can help the government enforce the law. Using citizens at the border can produce a multitude of benefits, as demonstrated by the success of the European Union border's politics. Citizens can protect property from crime, deter drug sales, and act as additional community policing in border communities-allowing law enforcement and Border Patrol guards the leeway to focus on intercepting drug shipments and catching potential offenders. Critics of citizen involvement at the border are rightfully concerned with the safety and liability ramifications of these activities. A volunteer attempting to apprehend a trespasser on his or her property could be harmed without proper training and guidance. Minimizing these concerns requires a certain level of organization and accountability, which can be achieved through accreditation, official standards, and practical employment concepts consistent with volunteer service. The best way would be to encourage states to organize State Defense Forces, volunteer organizations dedicated to assisting the federal government in a number of activities, including border control. These forces report to and are funded by state governments, are governed by state law, and report to the governor. Such an organization allows State Defense Forces to use state military resources, such as armories and training sites, while requiring states to provide training and other resources to volunteers. Encourage private-sector investment in border infrastructure. The best means by which to tackle border infrastructure problems is through investment by the private sector. Not only would this save government resources, it would allow the private sector to use its knowledge and creativity to design border infrastructure that is commerce-friendly without jeopardizing security or sovereignty. The government can encourage the private sector to take these steps in a number of ways, for example, by expanding the protections of the increasing crime level by safety documentst which includes liability protection for private-sector entities investing in and marketing new technologies that increase border's community safety.

We need allow flexibility with homeland security grants. More robust community policing should be a key component of a smart border strategy. Community policing is a "collaboration between the police and the community that identifies and solves problems" in a proactive manner. It helps to deter the types of crime at the border, not to enforce federal immigration laws. Deterring this criminal activity will in turn make the federal government's challenge of policing the border more manageable. European Union should allow states and cities participating in join law to use funds from homeland security grants to provide community policing at

the border, including overtime for state and local law enforcement agents assisting in federal immigration enforcement investigations.

An effective border strategy cannot focus exclusively on land borders. As land borders become more secure, drug smugglers and human traffickers will quickly look to sea options. Maritime security efforts must be enhanced in conjunction with land security. The Coast Guard acts as the law enforcement for the high seas, however, it lacks the resources and capacities to do its job as effectively as it could.

Cross-border crime and police work

In a world where all crime is local, cross-border criminal mobility and cross-border crimes would be limited to a fairly small corridor around the borders between countries. The limited action radius of offenders would prevent them from committing crimes farther than a few kilometers beyond the border into a neighboring country. In a world where all crime is perpetrated by itinerant offenders who face few mobility restrictions, borders would not have any effect on where offenders travel to, or on where cross-border crimes are perpetrated. The world we live in is probably situated somewhere in between these two extremes, but we do not precisely know where. This lack of knowledge could hopefully be decreased by systematic empirical research on criminal mobility and cross-border crime.

Most empirical work on the mobility of offenders supports a sedentary offender model. According to this model, offenders restrict their criminal activities to their local environment, i.e., to the area around their place of residence. Even ‘commuters’ (Canter and Larkin, 1993), offenders that commit crimes away from their home environment, usually do not travel very far. Empirical studies of the home-crime distance (sometimes referred to as ‘journey-to-crime’ studies) have demonstrated time and again that this distance is generally short (e.g., Wiles and Costello, 2000; Snook, 2004; Levine and Lee, 2013). Furthermore, the journey to crime is subject to distance decay, i.e., the frequency of crimes decreases with the distance from home. The implication of these findings is that offenders who commit multiple crimes will generally commit these crimes within fairly limited geographical boundaries. The findings on distance decay and short home-crime distances have been criticized as being methodological artifacts of the tendency of most researchers to analyze police records from a single city or region, which results in biased findings because such records generally underestimate crimes that local offenders commit outside the city or region, and certainly do not reveal any crimes committed abroad (Polišenská, 2008; Van Daele, 2008; Van Daele et al., 2012; Vandeviver, 2013). The

nomadic offender model describes the behavior of offenders who have no long-term fixed residence, who travel and perpetrate crime in groups, who commit mainly nonviolent property crimes at high rates and in multiple countries, and who travel frequently in groups over long distances. The term “mobile banditry” was adopted by the Council of the European Union (5 November 2010) to describe the activities of such groups. Recent empirical work in Belgium (Van Daele and Vander Beken, 2010; Van Daele et al., 2012) and in The Netherlands (Siegel, 2014) describes the activities of offender groups that originate from Eastern and Central Europe in terms of this nomadic offender model. In fact, the nomadic model has not been applied outside Europe and outside the context of mobility of criminals from East- and Central-Europe to West-Europe. Note that the main criminal activities attributed to these nomadic offender groups are quite different from the activities attributed to traditional ‘organized crime groups’ that specialize in illegal cross-border trafficking of goods and people (Kleemans and de Poot, 2008). Cross-border crime is a global problem that needs to be addressed, and in the European Union, for example, this problem is seen as being so serious that the Parliament has been asked to priorities relations with all member countries by continuing to support fighting of transnational crime through capacity building while improving citizen security. It is also stated that European Union has to face a complex matrix of national security concerns and crimes ranging from drugs, human trafficking and problems of homicide and violent crime in the ungoverned space. All member countries reports that in addressing border issues the governments needs front-burner policies that will deal with a growing diversity of interests in that region and the current resource constraints. The policies should identify key strategic priorities in strengthening ties with other countries, seek to promote changes in third countries, and should help fight organized crime. Crime level has created strong tensions within villages and with other neighbouring villages, where people no longer welcome visitors because of fear that the visitors may be spying or are thieves themselves. People are also afraid to share their issues of concern in case they anger fellow villagers who might invite offenders. This has created serious mistrust among villagers. The relationship between neighbouring villages has also soured as they may perceive each other as crimes leading to movement between villages becoming difficult. This has created hostility and led to fights over grazing sites and trespassing.

In some areas, erecting fences is the best way to tackle the illegal-entry problem. But the cost makes it important to use fencing only in areas with a low “melting point.” The melting point is the time it takes for an individual to cross the border and “melt” into a landscape unnoticed. In urban border communities, spending money on physical barriers makes sense because

individuals can easily cross the border and sneak quickly into the urban landscape (for example, one can hide in a building or steal a car and drive away).

The main barrier to overcome was the overall public perception of the police service as a merely suppressive power under the control of the State. Crime was seen as an exclusive governmental issue.

We need to remember that the content of the policies that the criminal policy is meant to support is not clear or has overriding political importance. Usually criminal policies in the economic sphere are meant to help secure support for governmental regulatory policies of economic activities. Main policies that are not clearly defined have a negative impact on law enforcement since it is not clear what is protected or why, e.g. highly differentiated import levies. Similarly, if the main policies are very political in nature, e.g. certain subsidies programmes to companies to stimulate economic activity in a certain direction, the policy makers want the positive effects to be visible, not the possible abuses. This situation may be recognized by declarations of officials such as 'the amount of fraud involved is only marginal compared to the advantages of the policies executed'. Though unclarity of the policy or its highly political nature are quite dissimilar, the bottom line is the same: policy makers do not want the main policies to be disturbed by criminal policies nor by information about the things that go wrong. - Either the criminal policy or the responsibilities for that policy are unclear. If a policy has no clear objectives, information does not help much. Similarly if it is not clear who is responsible for those objectives, a criminal policy is not easily made operational or put into action. If the criminal policy or the policy responsibility is not clear, knowledge to improve the policies is neither used nor sought. Comments that may betray this somewhat unclear situation are the following: "we are still shaping our criminal policy", "there are a number of committees at work and we want to wait for their reports", "we are dependent on another department so we cannot act on our own". The criminal policy is of a minimalist kind. When the criminal justice system is meant to do no more than react in a minimalist manner in those cases that come to light, the need for information or the use of it is minimal as well. Take for example a simple retributive system that simply hands down a sanction that is proportional to guilt or damage in the individual case. In such a context it is immaterial whether there are more criminal cases to be discovered, or whether alternative approaches may produce better effects. All that matters is a formally appropriate response. Apart from confirming or not whether this is the case, information has little to add to the shaping or evaluating of such a policy. Key comments that cut off further investigation are of the type of community policing success or bad luck.

Even though we may know reasonably accurately the number of terrorist attacks, it may be hard to be sure how many of them involve cross-border liaison, and the amount of terrorist-related activity - extortion, narco-terrorism, fraud - certainly is unknown. In the case of burglary, robbery, vice, white-collar crime, and even (before 1990) frauds against the European Community, cross-border crimes simply merge into the general (and often unilluminating) statistics of recorded crime. This does not mean that nothing can be said about these phenomena. It means that transnational crime cannot be presented and tabulated in the same way as can crimes occurring within the borders of the individual European states. Indeed, even if we were to tabulate data on cross-border crime, much of it would be highly speculative and not amenable to the sort of household surveys that produced the European victimization data. Drug enforcement authorities, for example, have an interest in maximizing public concern about a problem by focusing on “new” drug epidemics; and those who wish to do something about fraud and money-laundering may be tempted to generate large figures to “demonstrate” the scale of the problem. There is an almost total absence of any available or even readily collectable systematic data from policing agencies on cross-border crime, particularly where information is sought on which countries are involved. However competent their work is on an individual case level, very little appears to be known even by specialist squads about patterns of criminal trading overseas. It is no accident that the best and most systematic data in this article come from my exploratory analysis of private sector information on credit card fraud, for these firms have developed hard data on patterns of victimization in order to try to cut down on their commercial losses. Criminal policy never flows automatically out of empirical data or even from intelligence analysis: there is always a political dimension to it. However, without knowing more about the dynamics of international criminal enterprise, it is hard for policy makers to forecast sensibly what the optimal practical European response to it should be, even if there were consensus about whether cannabis should be controlled or rates harmonized. Policy-making inevitably is based on shifting empirical sands of information about how much crime there is and how it is being organized, but it might be helpful if we knew whether the foundations of our knowledge were dry and stable or were quicksand.

Conclusions

Despite the fact that legal cooperation between the four places needs further strengthening, their respective police forces have been quick to benefit from information gleaned from one another. For instance, in more

countries than ever before mainland police have been setting up auxiliary police along the community policing model. Also there has been further valuable input from the printed word. The police in many mainland cities have been writing articles for their various police journals to share their ideas on crime control, investigation methods and skills, evidence collection and the possible adaptation of effective foreign policing techniques. It could even be suggested that the modernization of mainland police has become a silent revolution that contributes immensely to the regional success in controlling cross-border crime.

Supporters of state and local participation in border security emphasize that European Union needs to do more to integrate state and local governments into the planning and execution of border strategy because these governments are much more familiar with the on-the-ground realities at the border and bring valuable knowledge of local culture, customs, geography, politics, and threats to the community. Local governments enforce housing violations and police departments recover stolen cars, often cutting off smuggling and drug-trade avenues. Others argue that since state and locals often end up footing the bill for illegal immigrants, these governments should have an opportunity to engage in decision making at the border.

As can be seen, public safety cannot be taken for granted. It can only be achieved not only through the professionalism of our finest, but through successful collaboration with their neighboring counterparts as well. They all deserve our respect and gratitude, and not calumny and frivolous criticisms.

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